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A Letter

Written to one of the

MEMBERS

OF

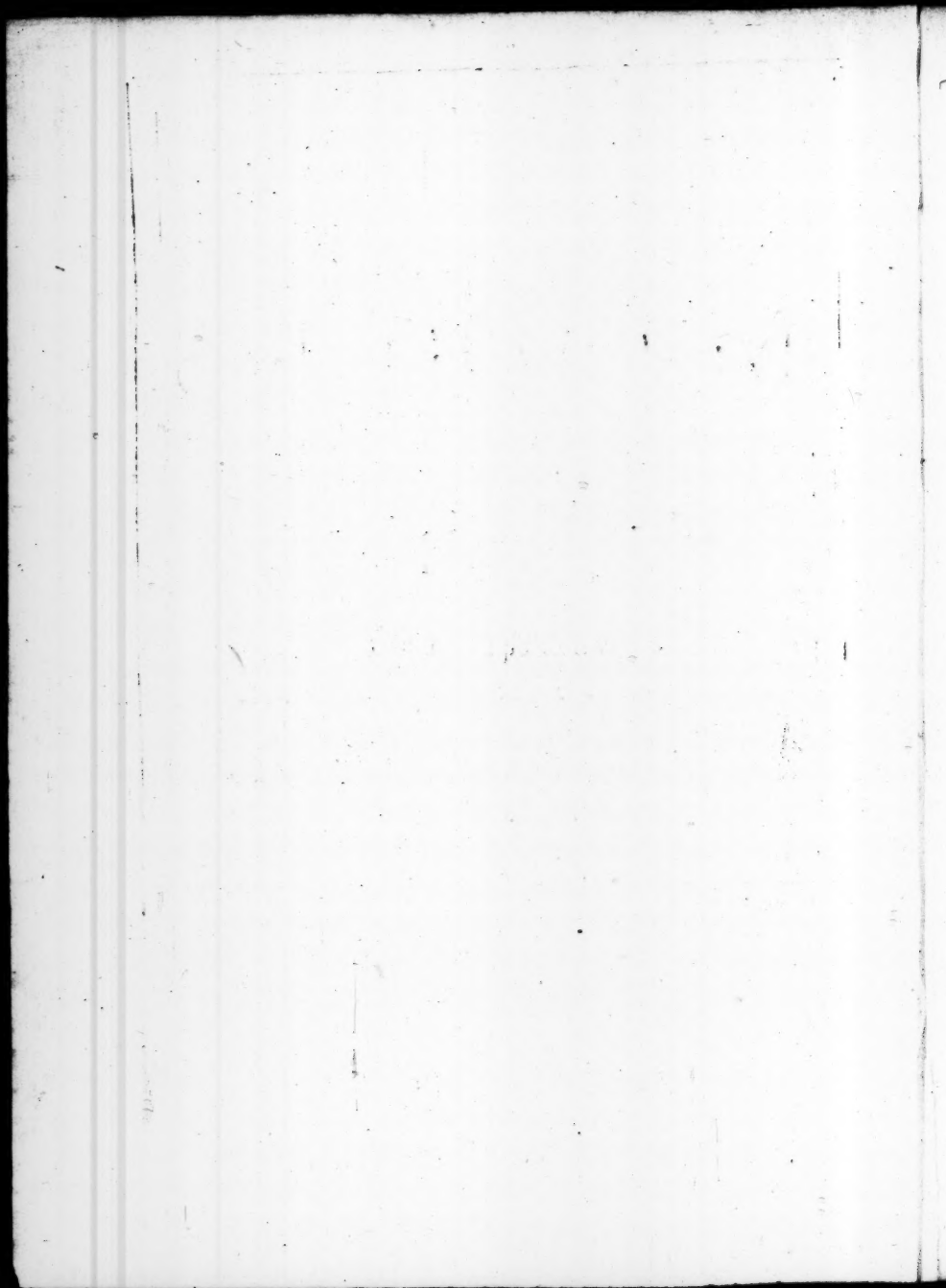
Parliament,

ABOUT THE

State of this Present WAR.

LONDON,

Printed in the YEAR, 1692.



*A LETTER written to one of the
Members of Parliament about the
State of this Present War.*

SIR,

YOUR Last Letter to me, Argues your Zeal for the Security of Religion, and the Honour of the Nation; you tell me, that you are fully resolved to promote the Interest of both in the next Session of Parliament. I am sensible, that a true English-man and a good Protestant, can propose to himself no other design; but you know that we may mean well, and yet be deceived in those Measures which are to be taken to bring things to a happy Issue. Now since our antient Friendship, and your favourable Opinion of me, that by my Travels, I may have attain'd to some knowledge of the World, and of the Interest of *Europe*, has put you upon asking my Judgment in a Matter of this moment; I shall open to you my Mind with all the Candour and Freedom of a sincere and faithful Friend.

You are throughly convinced, that the glory and security of *England*, require we should set out as strong a Fleet as possibly we can; but you find fault with the great Number of our Forces in the *Low-Countries*, and look upon the vast Expences we are

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at to carry on a War in which we are less concerned than others, and are so ill seconded by them, as no small grievance to the Nation. This gives you an occasion to pass a severe sentence upon the slow Motions of the *Germans*, and their want of Union and Agreement; whilst on the other hand you exalt the united Power and wise Conduct of the *French*, and conclude that since the strength of their Armies, and the good Posture in which are all their fortified Towns in *Flanders*, leaves no hopes to the Confederates of making any impression upon 'em that way, we should not be obstinate in the pursuit of a design that is so likely to turn to our Disadvantage.

I must confess, Sir, that I can not but wonder you should any wise favour the Opinion of those who fancy that *England* is not much concern'd in the general Fate of *Europe*, who flatter themselves that the Sea which divides us from the rest of the World, is our Safeguard against all Dangers from abroad, and that when we engage in any Foreign War, 'tis not so much for our own preservation, as to make a shew of our Power, by protecting those whom an Enemy would unjustly oppress.

But these wise Politicians consider not how strangely the state of our Affairs is altered. There was a Time indeed, when we were in a condition to decide the fate of our Neighbours, when the Success of War, and the Conditions of Peace depended upon the Resolutions which we thought fit to take. And I am perswaded that we should still have enjoy'd this Noble Prerogative, had it not been neglected under the two last Reigns, but it was then made over to *France*, which by our Means is now grown so formidable at Sea, and has without any Opposition

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on our side enlarged its Conquests towards the *Rhine*, and in the *Low Countries*.

I would not in the least charge the Nation with this ill Management of Affairs; I am convinc'd that She ever understood her true Interest. The growing Power of *France* did often move her to complain, and caus'd her sometimes to murmur in those unhappy days. 'Twas with grief, and not without being highly provok'd, that she beheld the strange proceedings of the Court; and had her good intentions been seconded, we should have humbled the *French* with more ease, than we can now resist them; for they are arrived to such a degree of Power and Greatness, that we may justly dread the consequences of it, if by Sea and Land we do not oppose them with more Vigour than ever. And this I hope you may soon be made sensible of.

'Tis certain, that we cannot lessen our Land Forces this next Campagne, without delivering up the Low Countrys into the hands of our Enemies, who are resolv'd to use their utmost effort to make an end of that Conquest. *Spain* you see, has but two or three places left which are able to sustain a siege, and no very long one neither, as Towns are now Attack't. Nay, if there was not at present a very numerous Army on Foot, the *French* might easily penetrate into the very heart of the Countrey, now that *Brussel*, and several other open places, are become Frontier Towns. The *Dutch* are not able to raise more Forces, then what they have already in pay, and you know how little we can rely upon any new Supplies from the *Spaniards*; so that the safety of the United *Provinces* wholly depends upon our Vigorous pursuit of this War. They are lost,

if we will not do our best endeavours to defend them.

But with what dismal consequences would such a loss be attended? It would prove fatal to all the Neighbouring *Princes* of *Leige*, *Juliers*, *Treves*, and *Colein*, who would be forced to recall their Troops, and in all likely-hood to employ them in the Enemies Services. But what is most to be fear'd, *Holland* whose Fleet and Army are so great a support to the whole Confederacy, lying open on every side to the invasions of the *French*, must either become their Conquest, or submit to any Conditions of Peace that they will be pleased to impose. You may imagine what kind of resistance *Germany* would be able to make upon such a Revolution. 'Tis likely the *Turk* would lay hold of so fair an Opportunity to continue the War, or to break the Articles of peace, if it were concluded. And though the *Emperour* should be at liberty on that side, what support could he expect from the Divided *Princes* of the *Empire*, who could not remain United against *France*, which would soon force to a Compliance, those that border upon her Conquests, and has such infallible Arts of gaining Friends in all other Courts that are not within the reach of her Sword? But suppose the *Emperour* did engage in his interest all the *Princes* of *Germany*, what success could he promise himself against an Enemy, whose power the greatest part of the forces of the *Empire*, and all those of *England*, *Spain*, and *Holland*, have much a do to resist? I hope I need not add, that the power of *France* would hereupon be vastly encreased, that she would have gain'd a considerable number of new Soldiers, having more Ports, more Men of War, she would ab-

folutely dispose of the Commerce of the World; and that Her Riches Multiplying with her Subjects, would open Her the way to an Universal Monarchy.

We shall not then be able to make any diversion in favour of the *Empire*, sufficient to defeat the Ambitious designs of so formidable an Enemy. For besides, that we could not raise forces enough for that purpose, though we Acted more Vigorously, and were at far greater expences, than what are necessary in our present Circumstances. Such a Diversion would become altogether impracticable. When *Holland* kept in awe will not dare to allow us the freedom of its Ports, and the *French* are Absolute Masters of all the Sea-Port Towns of the *Spanish Netherlands*, there being no free passage to be had, 'twill be impossible for *England* and *Germany* to joyn their forces. So that the whole Management of the War, must then be reduced to a weak defence at Sea, and our Fleet not being supported by the *Dutch*, will have enough to do to secure our own Coasts.

How soon should we then see *France* Flusht with Victory and Success, turn all her forces against us, whilst instead of the *Empire* of the Sea, which we have hitherto maintain'd as our proper Right, we shall find it a hard matter to keep up our Commerce? That of the *Mediterranean* Sea will be taken away by the influence, which the Power of *France* will have over *Italy*; and our Western Trade will be lost, by the number of Troops which they may send over to *Jamaica*, *Virginia*, and the *Barbadoes*, to make themselves Masters of all those Plantations. If without any other Sea-Port Town in the Low Countries,

Countries, but that of *Dunkirk*, they now Create us so much trouble, What can we expect when they shall have in their Hands all the Ports, which still belong to the *Spaniards*, and will dispose of those of *Holland* as their own?

Then will they foment our Domestick divisions with more Success than they have been yet able to do, and by protecting the Enemies of the Protestant Religion, who are still amongst us, together with the endeavours made to gain over to their party, such as have laid aside all Principles of Honour and Conscience, they may in a short time be able to hasten our ruin.

You seem to insinuate in a passage of your Letter, that the *French* may be periwaded to limit their Conquests, and to rest satisfied with the Low Countries, if a peace be concluded upon those Terms; but since you speak so doubtfully of this matter, give me leave, Sir, to think you never entertain'd a thought so unworthy of an *English* man that has any love for the Honour of his Nation. A Nation of such Courage and Bravery, whose Victorious Armies have more than once penetrated into the heart of *France*, and Conquer'd most of the *Provinces*, must at last be beholden to the bare Generosity of the *French* for all the advantages of a peace. Our Commerce, our Priviledges, our Religion must all depend upon a meer *Capricio* of those, who have so often dreaded our Arms, and when they are pleased to make us slaves, we must patiently endure our fetters. Can we suffer such kind of thoughts without shame and confusion? And yet this will prove our fate, if *England* should now abandon the Low Countries, to the Common Enemy, and put him in a condition to dispose

pose of the happiness of *Europe* at his will and pleasure.

For let us suppose that *France*, to breathe a while, should consent to such a peace, what assurance have we that it is not on purpose to break it as soon as by her intreague she has secur'd the success of any new design? What Warrantees can we Choose, that shall punish a perfidiousness of this nature? And what Oaths can we imagine for our security, that have not already been often violated? Did the *French* ever propose to themselves any other end in all their Treaties, but to disunite those whom a common interest had engaged in a War, and when some of them have been gain'd, the most sacred OATHS have been broken to Oppress the Rest by open Violence. Their Policy consists in keeping up an Army after the peace is concluded, which they do with ease, the Revenues of the Crown continuing still the same: But this gives them a prodigious advantage whensoever they will surprize and attack of a sudden any other State, that is wont at the end of a War, to disband its forces, which are paid only by such Taxes as are not, according to the Constitution of the Government, to last in times of Peace. We have seen in our days, how the *Pyrenean* Treaty, the Peace of *Nimeguen*, and the Truce of Twenty Years have been broken, sometimes by Acts of Hostility committed before any Declaration of War, and sometimes by Declarations published, without any plausible pretence; but ever attended with Fire and Sword, and such Violences, as have out-done the Cruelty of the most barbarous Nations.

'Tis natural to the *French* to be always in Action, and perpetually to contrive how to enlarge at
any

any rate, the Limits of their Country. And since they have never altered their Proceedings, when they could meet with a fair Opportunity, since to satisfy their Ambition, they have so often trodden under foot what Men hold most sacred, Can we think they will change of a sudden, when the entire Conquest at the *Low-Countries* shall enable them to advance farther? One may be sure that the most solemn Treaties will not hinder them from endeavouring to surprize their Neighbours, by declaring War without any just pretence; nor from attacking in time of Peace, their most considerable Towns, both which must engage the Allies to stand upon their Guard, and put them to the Charges of keeping up Armies, though such a Peace were concluded. As for our selves in particular, we should be dayly exposed to the Loss of our Commerce, and the Danger of being subdued by *France*, if we had not for our security the same Number of Land Forces, and as good a Fleet at Sea, as we have at this present time. All which would drain the Nation by new Levies of Money, whereof we should have no hopes of seeing an end: So that by refusing to make a considerable Effort, that may force our Enemies to a Peace, which it will not be in their power to break when they please, we shall have no other remedy left to prevent our utter Ruine, but a perpetual succession of Taxes and Impositions. What Expences soever we may be at to carry on this War more vigorously, are not to be compared with these Extremities unto which we are likely to be reduced.

I shall not observe, that perpetual Taxes, and a standing Army in time of Peace, are Steps that lead to an Arbitrary Power: We live under Sovereigns,
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whose Justice and Moderation free us from all Apprehensions of this Nature, and who would be as sensibly concern'd as our selves, to see the Nation brought under a necessity of introducing an example of so dangerous a consequence.

But I cannot Omit what is most to be Lamented, in this Case, that our utmost efforts, though continued for the space of several years, would then be spent in vain, and serve to put off for a while, but not to prevent our ruine.

'Tis impossible for any one to entertain a better Opinion of our Forces, and of our National Valour than I do; but I cannot be perswaded that we shall be able to do that singly against an Enemy, whose Power would be so vastly Encreased, which we can scarce do now with the help of so many *Allies*.

Give me leave to add that whenever we lose *Holland*, it will be hard, if not impossible for us, to set out a Fleet that shall resist all the Forces of *France*. Our Coasts lie Open in most parts of our *Island*, and we have no Fortified Towns to stop the Motions of an Army, if it were once Landed; an Event, which we have the more reason to dread, because that upon such an invasion we have still but too many amongst us, who would lay hold of that opportunity to declare against the Government: So that if our Fleet should receive any considerable Damage, either by the violence of Stormy Weather, or by the unhappy Success of a Sea-Fight, we know not how dismal the Consequences of such a misfortune might prove.

We must not then flatter our selves: The Affairs of *Europe* are in such a posture, that if the *Low-Coun-*

tries are deliver'd up to the *French*, they will be in a condition to give *England* the Law, and we should soon be put to the sad Tryal of what they are able to do. The Late King *James*, whom they have taken under their protection, would furnish 'em with pretences enough to fall upon us, and the Conquest of the *Neitherlands* would help to Crown their designs with Victory and Success. Should any one be so prepossess'd, as to imagine that *England* could hold out alone against the Power of *France*, at least he must own, that this cannot be done without such Exorbitant Charges, as bear no manner of proportion with the Expences that are necessary at present, to save the *Low-Countries*, and to procure a Happy and lasting Peace.

But if it should prove that we are not in a condition to resist singly, where shall we then seek for help? Can we rely upon *Germany*, employ'd in a War against the *Turk*, weakened by the divisions of the *Princes* of the *Empire*, it may be already subdued by *France*, and which having lost all Communication with *England*, will be unconcerned at the Unhappiness of a Nation whose Alliance could be no ways beneficial to its Confederates? Shall we Trust to *Spain*, which it would be in vain to reckon upon after the loss of the *Low-Countries*? Can we hope for supplies from *Sweden* and *Denmark*, who value their Commerce with *France* at too high a Rate to break with that Crown for our Sakes, and whose different interests besides will not permit them to Unite; though to say the Truth, we should be but ill supplied by all their forces joyned together? In a word, can we depend upon *Holland*, either subdued or so overaw'd by *France*, that they will not dare

dare to build a Man of War without leave, drain'd by the Excessive Charges of an Unfortunate War, discourag'd by the ill Success of Affairs, and unwilling to enter into a new and more dangerous Confederacy with a Nation, that shall have made them a prey to their Enemies by abandoning the *Low-Countries*?

Yet let us suppose, that we may be in a condition to withstand alone with some kind of Success the Power of *France*, and shall need no Foreign supplies for that purpose. 'Tis certain, that not to be undone, is as much as we can hope for by the defence we shall be able to make; whereas we are now engaged in a War, which if we resolve to prosecute with vigour, may reduce our Enemies to such streights, that it will not be in their Power to undertake any thing against us hereafter: Our chief Aim, if left to our selves, will be to secure part of our Commerce, whereas we may now secure the whole, and utterly Ruin that of *France*. We shall scarce be able to save our *Plantations*, whereas it may lie in our Power to drive the *French* out of the *West-Indies*. We shall set out a Fleet only for the Security of our Coasts, whereas we may, by pursuing the advantages of our Late Victory, maintain the *Empire* of the Seas, which no Enemy could hitherto wrest out of our hands: In short, we shall then labour to preserve our Religion and Liberty, the dearest of all our enjoyments; whereas we may now Contribute, to the general Peace of *Europe*, and to the Restoration of the Protestant Religion in that part of the World where it has been so Violently Persecuted.

You are inclined to think, that the greatest danger we can run, is to submit to a Peace like that of *Nimeguen*. But I must desire you to consider, that even such a Peace is not to be had, if this next Campaign our Forces should not be more considerable than they are now; you are sensible that a Treaty of that Nature, wherein so many parties of different interests are concerned, is not to be dispatcht in a day; and since 'tis an undoubted Maxime, That to arrive to a Tolerable Peace, one should have as good an Army in the Field, as if the War was still to be Carried on, we cannot be guilty of a worse fault, than to weaken our selves in the *Low-Countries*, whilst our Enemies are Dispos'd to Act with all their Forces, meeting with less resistance, the prosperous Success of their Affairs would soon defeat our hopes of obtaining the same conditions to which they may now seem willing to hearken. The loss of one single Town would be enough to enlarge their pretentions. Were it necessary to confirm this by an example, I might put you in mind, that when King *Charles the Second* sent My Lord *Duras* over into *France* with Propositions of Peace, that could not but displease that Crown, they were nevertheless Accepted, least *England* upon a refusal should have embraced the Party of the Confederates. Fair promises were made, that all the Towns which the King had mentioned should be Restored, *Tourmay* only excepted; for the Exchange whereof, something Equivalent was offered; but when by delays the *French* had gain'd time, and had made themselves Masters of *Ghent* and *Ipers*, they began to talk at another rate, imperiously to impose at the Treaty of *Nimeguen*, what Terms of Peace they thought fit, and to declare that they did not look upon

upon themselves as bound to stand to the offers, which were then made, if so be the Confederates with- in a certain day limited, should not consent to what they had proposed.

If *France* was so imperious at a time when such a Haughty Carriage might have provok't *England* to side with the Confederates, what can be expected from them when they will have nothing of this nature to fear?

We must therefore pursue this War with more than ordinary vigour, though we had no other design than to make a Peace like that of *Nimeguen*, which I am sure no True *English-Man* can ever approve of, since we should be forced thereupon to continue in Arms, and the *Low-Countries* would become a prey to the perpetual invasions of the *French*; can we now be satisfied with a Peace which appear'd so unjust to King *Charles* the Second, that to prevent the Conclusion of it, he was ready to enter upon a most Hazardous War. 'Tis well known, that if this Resolution had been taken before, *Holland* made their particular Treaty, He would have procured a more advantageous Peace to all the Confederates. If a Court guided for so many years by the Councils of *France*, so unconcern'd in all appearance for the Protestant interest, could yet resolve to make such a step, what should *England* do now, which every one looks upon as the main bulwark of the Reformed Religion, and of the liberty of *Europe*.

'Tis so apparent, the *French* are in a perpetual apprehension, least we should renew our efforts, that this very reason ought to perswade us to do it. We have seen them call back their Forces from *Provinces*, which had no Fortifications for their Defence; and

and leave a way open to our *Allies* to invade their Countrey, whilst they gathered all their Troops in the *Neitherlands*, where they are fortified on every side, and ventur'd upon a Siege, the Success whereof was most hazardous and uncertain. By such extraordinary ways of proceeding, what could they aim at? But to discourage *England* and *Holland*, and hinder them from contributing any longer towards the Charges of a War, in which they would have them believe 'twas impossible to succeed. Now if this was the design of our Enemies, as we cannot doubt but it was, we shall Conspire with them to our own ruin, should we be discouraged at a time, when the great preparations they make ought to excite us to bold, and more Vigorous Resolutions. It will be said to our Confusion, that we have had a hand in breaking a Confederacy which would prove Fatal to the respective States that compose it, should it chance to be dissolved. Whilst it remains intire, we may promise our selves, that *France* may be Humbled, and that upon the most unexpected Accidents that can befall us, we shall still be in a condition to conclude a Peace as much to our advantage, as that which our Enemies may now be willing to make. They are so sensible of this, that nothing has been Omitted, which lay in their Power to divide the *Allies*. Some have been offer'd the Fairest Terms imaginable, if they would but consent to a particular Treaty from others, they have bought a neutrality at most Excessive rates, and such as could not be prevail'd with by promises; they have endeavour'd to intimidate by their Conquests, all which would be of no great effect, unless our *Allies* being disheartned by our slackness, we should at last do
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our selves in behalf of *France*, what all her intri-
gues, and the Force of her Arms, have not been
able to compass.

But if we value our true interest, the improve-
ment we shall make of this present League, will be
to reduce *France* within its one Limits. The Uni-
ting of such a number of *Princes* in the same quar-
rel, has been the work of many years; and the
Concurrence of several extraordinary events have
served to Keep up this Union; since we are engaged
in it upon our Happy Revolution, how many Towns
have we been oblig'd to besiege, how many victo-
ries have we gain'd in *Ireland*, before we were in a
condition to turn all our Forces against the Com-
mon Enemy? And can we now resolve to quit,
what we have so gloriously begun? Are we got so
far only to retreat, when we have much less to do
then what we have done already? This would be
to deceive the general Hopes of *Europe*, and willful-
ly to expose our selves to all those misfortunes which
we have avoided with so much prudence. If we
neglect so good an Opportunity of securing Peace
and Happiness to the Nation, we have no reason to
expect it will ever be offered again. Such a variety of
Circumstances have Contributed toward the form-
ing of this League, that 'tis not to be supposed
they will ever meet again to make up another of
the like Nature; and though all the parties concern-
ed in this Confederacy should continue in a dispo-
sition to renew it a second time, 'tis certain, that ere
they could Unanimously Act, the Power of *France*,
would be so vastly encreased, that they would have
little reason to apprehend any danger from such an
Union.

I shall add, that the Hopes of a Peace between the *Emperour*, and the *Turks*, should give life to our resolutions. The weakness of the *Ottoman Empire*, wearied by a long Train of ill Success. The loss of Great *Waradine*, and the Retreat of the *Tartars*, may allow as to look upon such a Peace as near at hand. This would Reunite all the Forces of the *Empire* against *France*, and the Intrigues of that Crown would then no longer prevail in *Germany*; but such a Happy Change, were it improved, would yet be of no benefit to us, if before it comes to pass, we suffer the *French* to make themselves Masters of the Fate of *Europe*, by the Conquest of the *Low-Countries*. They have nothing more at heart, than to strike up a Peace with some of the *Allies*, before that of the Port he concluded. To this end they offer to help the *Emperour* to carry on the War against the *Turk*, who, that he may not incline to an Accommodation, is assured at the same time, by repeated OATHS, and Solemn Protestations, that he shall never be forsaken.

'Tis our interest therefore to deprive our Enemy's of the Advantages of this most shameful *Alliance*, by ballancing at least their efforts, till they have no such diversion to reckon upon; and so may be the more easily brought to accept of Reasonable Terms of Peace.

But though the War should continue in *Hungary*, which it is not likely to do, it cannot be denyed, but that the Confederates will nevertheless be in a condition, not only to oppose the Forces of *France*, but to reap great Advantages from this present War, if we are willing to contribute towards it as far as lies in our Power. It depends upon us to enable

His

His Majesty to bring the *Germans* earlier in the field, and with more Troops than they have had these last Compagnes, we have no reason to doubt of their good intentions, and who having so great an interest in *Germany*, and so considerable an Authority in *Holland*, is the only fit person to Cement our Union with that Common-wealth, to which, in this present Conjuncture, 'tis so much our interests to adhere. Of a King whom no fatigue, nor the worst of seasons ever diverted from being where his presence was judged necessary; whom no prosperity swells, no difficulties can dishearten, no dangers can daunt. And shall we offer to abandon him in so just and Necessary a War? Sure this can never enter into our thoughts. I know that considerable sums will be required of us, but if we design to Act Offensively, or to prevent the Progress of the *French*, our efforts must not be lessened, whilst those of our Enemies are like to be continued, and probably encreased. It would be hard to be put to such vast charges were it for a slight and Trifling interest. But here all is at stake, the Honour, Peace, and Liberty of the Nation. If therefore the preservation of our Laws, of our Priviledges, of our Commerce, and of our Religion, are Dear to us, we must shew it by our Vigorous Resolutions, and steady zeal in the Prosecution of a War, that will secure us the possession of such unvaluable blessings.

I am,

SIR, &c.